THE RESPONDER
TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE • JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER
OIL SPILL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAM • MARCH 2014

South Texas Coastal Zone Responder Training

From October 22-24, Texas General Land Office responders from South Texas Coastal Zone (STCZ) offices in Port Lavaca, Corpus Christi and Brownsville deployed to Port Mansfield for a three-day training exercise. The goal of the extensive training was to emulate response in remote areas and provide an environment to test innovative response strategies.

Responders received the new Globally Harmonized System training to align with OSHA standards on the first day. Three airboats were then deployed in an isolated area along the Laguna Madre shoreline. This exercise tested the ability to determine remote launch and recovery locations with water and weather conditions taken into consideration. Geographic Response Plans, presented in ICS 204 format and created for the Port Mansfield area, received validation for maximum effectiveness. The second day of training commenced with loading all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) onto response boats for deployment to a remote location. Responders had to beach the boats to offload and recover the ATVs. This exercise provided substantial training in deployment of response equipment in remote areas, and in the handling of response boats when fully loaded. The second day also included additional training in deploying 18-inch containment boom to protect the harbor entrance. The last day of training took responders to various shoreline types located around the Port Mansfield area. Two Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Teams (SCAT) conducted assessments of beach profiles and simulated degrees of shoreline oiling. The teams faced many obstacles including narrow sandy beaches and swampy terrain.

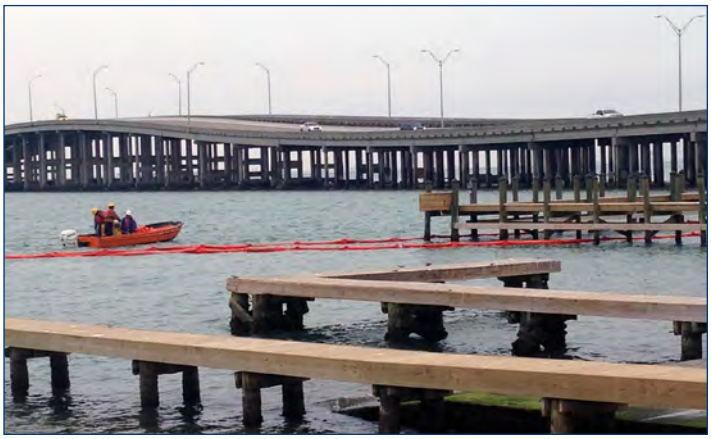
This three-day exercise helped responders become familiar with equipment that would be useful during an actual spill event, like Forward Looking Infra Red (FLIR) cameras. These enable responders to identify oil spilled in the water at night, and determine oil levels in storage tanks. Having this ability helps determine both the source and amount of oil that can potentially be released into the environment during spill response events. Additionally, Side Scan Sonar has been installed on three STCZ vessels. This kind of sonar provides photo-like imagery of submerged vessels and ruptured pipelines that may be leaking below the surface. The training also provided the opportunity to test communications enhancements made to the STCZ mobile Command Post. Until recently, the Land Office was unable to establish reliable communications in remote areas of the STCZ. Besides minimizing safety concerns, the new equipment allows field responders to communicate with decision-making personnel in Corpus Christi and Austin. As a result, responses to vessel spills and tar ball impacts in isolated areas of the STCZ will be more effective. In addition, the communications equipment ensures interoperability with our partners in the emergency response community.

The training provided an environment to work as a team, utilize spill strategies, and test new response equipment in a remote location. Land Office personnel showed the ability to network and cross train with other regional offices. Future training and exercises are being planned along the Texas coast due to the overwhelming benefit this training platform provides.

GLO South Texas Coastal Zone Responders prepare for three-day training exercise in Port Mansfield.

Emergency Preparedness Exercises in the Coastal Bend

In November and December of 2013, Texas General Land Office personnel participated in facility-lead exercises with Citgo–Corpus Christi Refinery, NuStar Logistics, and the Valero–Corpus Christi Refineries. Simulated oil spill response exercises are an opportunity for industry and federal, state and local agencies to discuss concerns and viewpoints within the response community. These exercises also provide new employees working for industry or government agencies the chance to build relationships with each other instead of meeting for the first time at an actual incident. The conducted exercises ranged in complexity from worst case discharge scenarios with actual field deployment activities to tabletop exercises. During the exercises, issues are addressed that may not have been encountered before and responders work through them, gaining experience in simulated oil spills. Often, the exercises include working through multiple events happening concurrently, such as a fire in conjunction with an oil spill. Pre-planning and exploring tactical strategies prior to incidents saves valuable time during actual oil spill responses. Regardless of the size or the scope of the exercise, the entire response structure benefits when more people are involved.



The Corpus Christi Area Oil Spill Control Association (CCAOSCA) deploys boom in Nueces Bay during the NuStar Logistics exercise conducted in December.

Additionally, these exercises provide opportunities to examine the various roles within the Incident Command System (ICS) and to incorporate the Area Contingency Plan (ACP). Organizations use such exercises to train personnel in new positions in the ICS structure, as a refresher for roles filled by pre-identified personnel, or to train personnel identified as backups for positions in contingency plans. In addition to the ICS practice during exercises, the ACP is another component that comes in handy. It's continuously updated and includes procedures, guidelines and geographic response plans expected to be used in the event of an incident. The ACPs can be found on the GLO Texas Coastal Oil Spill Planning & Response Toolkit.

The Land Office would like to encourage oil handling facilities to contact their federal, state and local partners to participate in planned exercises. Participation benefits the coastal communities we live in and allows us to be prepared.

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Report oil spills 1-800-832-8224 24 hours

The Responder is published by the Texas General Land Office. Questions and comments may be submitted to Angela Jarvis via email at angela.jarvis@glo.texas.gov or by phone at 281-470-6597.

Call for Nominations for the 2013 OSPRA Awards

The call for OSPRA nominations for calendar year 2013 is here!

Every year, the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program honors individuals, organizations and companies that go above and beyond their normal duties regarding oil spill education, prevention and response. Please take a minute to submit an application recognizing those providing outstanding service in the oil spill community in 2013.

Applications are available via our website at glo.texas.gov or can be mailed directly to you. The deadline for application submission is April 18, 2014.

For more information please contact Debbie Saenz at 512.475.1466 or debbie.saenz@glo.texas.gov

GLO Takes Part in Oil Spill International Symposium

The International Symposium on Deep-sea Oil Spill and Offshore Oil-Gas Exploitation was held in Qingdao, China from October 28-29. Steven Buschang, Director of Research and Development/Scientific Support Coordinator presented along with other oil spill researchers from around the world, including representatives from the Ocean University of China, National Marine Environmental Forecasting Center, National Marine Hazard Mitigation Service, North China Sea Marine Forecasting Center of State Oceanic Administration, Organization of North China Sea Monitoring Center, SOA, CNOOC, Tianjin University of Science and Technology, Texas A&M University, Chevron Energy Technology Corporation, USA, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Rochester, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Ocean Wealth Flagship of the Commonwealth Science and Industry Research Organization, Australia.

During the symposium, participants exchanged views covering a wide range of topics related to oil spills such as management concepts, pollution prevention, contingency planning and response mechanisms, as well as marine environment protection, shelf circulation and oil spill trajectory prediction, and oil spill hydrodynamic modeling. China has a booming economy and a vibrant offshore oil drilling program; this, along with ever increasing vessel traffic make its waters and shorelines increasingly vulnerable to oil spills. China is currently looking at deep water drilling in the South China Sea and is extremely interested in lessons learned and how to properly plan for unexpected releases into the environment.

Oil spill researchers gather to exchange views and discuss lessons learned from past oil spill events and current strategies to help prepare for unexpected releases.

Buschang presented a retrospective on the state of Texas oil spill response focusing on lessons learned from events such as the Mega Borg spill, the Apex Barge spill and the Deepwater Horizon incident. He discussed how lessons learned from these, and other events that impacted the state have helped mold the Land Office's Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program into one of the premiere oil spill response organizations in the nation, and how these lessons could be applied to new, upcoming governmental spill response organizations. The hosts were warm and friendly people and very interested in sharing information on oil spill pollution response. We thank the Ocean University of China and its staff for showing such hospitality!

Oil spill researchers from around the world gather in Qingdao, China for the Oil Spill International Symposium on Deep-sea Oil Spill and Offshore Oil-Gas Exploitation.

Keller Middle School Career Day

Employees of the Region 2 La Porte Field Office of the Texas General Land Office were recently invited to the Lonnie B. Keller Middle School Career Day in Pasadena. This is an annual event that Land Office Oil Spill Program staffers attend, along with other professionals, giving students an opportunity to ask questions about various occupations and participate in hands-on demonstrations.

Jeff Davis, Jesse Mayorga and Angela Jarvis of the La Porte Field Office were able to meet with students and discuss educational and training requirements, along with the responsibilities of being a Responder with the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program. The students enjoyed looking through photos of past oil spill events and hearing about recent responses to local oil spills. There were demonstrations of equipment typically used in the field, including a tabletop demonstration of a drum-skimmer that the students always enjoy. It was a busy day with students participating and eager to learn about the state's oil spill program and the responsibility of maintaining our waterways and coastline for the future.


Jeff Davis discusses past oil spills with students at Keller Middle School during their Career Day.

Region 5 Donates Boom to Assist Area Partners

The Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program of the Texas General Land Office has always had an excellent working partnership with agencies and industries in the Region 5 Port Lavaca area. Through shared training, joint projects, and drills and spills, that working relationship has grown into a joint goal of preventing, preparing for and minimizing the effects of any oil spill in the area. Region 5 has continued to ensure that the level of response preparedness reaches even higher levels through local equipment donations.

The northern point of the Victoria Barge Canal is the Port of Victoria, Pickering Basin, where there are currently three large petroleum transfer facilities. Just in the last month, these transfer facilities loaded out 2 million barrels of Eagle Ford Shale crude oil via barge. Region 5 was able to donate 800 feet of 18-inch containment boom at the Port of Victoria's request. This donation places previously unused response capabilities in the center of an area in which a significant spill is most likely to occur.

Another containment boom request fulfilled by Region 5 was for 200 feet of 18-inch containment boom to our partners in the Seadrift area, Westside Calhoun County Navigation District (WSCCND). WSCCND has always actively assisted the Region 5 staff by providing information regarding spills and fleet activity, and assisted with the removal of a derelict sunken vessel at no cost to the Land Office. WSCCND is routinely the host of Region 5's largest oyster fleet. The donation will allow the WSCCND to be prepared for and minimize the effect of any spill impact from vessels within its harbor.

The Region 5 Oil Spill Office also partnered with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) Wildlife Division at Guadalupe Delta Wildlife Management Area when Kevin Kriegle, TPWD manager at the delta, requested a donation of 200 feet of 18-inch containment boom for something other than direct spill response. Instead, the boom will be used as a tool in TPWD's ongoing battle against the spread of an invasive exotic species, water hyacinth or Eichhornia crassipes. The removal of hyacinth is beneficial to the natural habitat and environment, and also benefits the Land Office by providing clear waterways in the event of a spill in the area.

The next team building project will be the donation of 1,200 feet of 18-inch containment boom and an accompanying trailer to the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). The ANWR hosts the remaining Whooping Crane population every winter and is considered a vital habitat for the continued existence of the endangered bird. Because the ANWR is located in a remote response area, it's advantageous to have enough boom on hand to deploy in the initial response phase of any spill in that area. The trailer will allow the ANWR to easily move boom from location to location as needed on this massive property. This boom donation will allow the ANWR to reach and maintain a high level of response capability.

These containment boom donations allow Region 5 to assist neighboring agencies in their preparations without them incurring additional costs, while lowering Land Office regional maintenance costs. Strategic placement of under used Land Office equipment allows the agency and its Region 5 area partners to achieve the highest standard of preparedness and response.

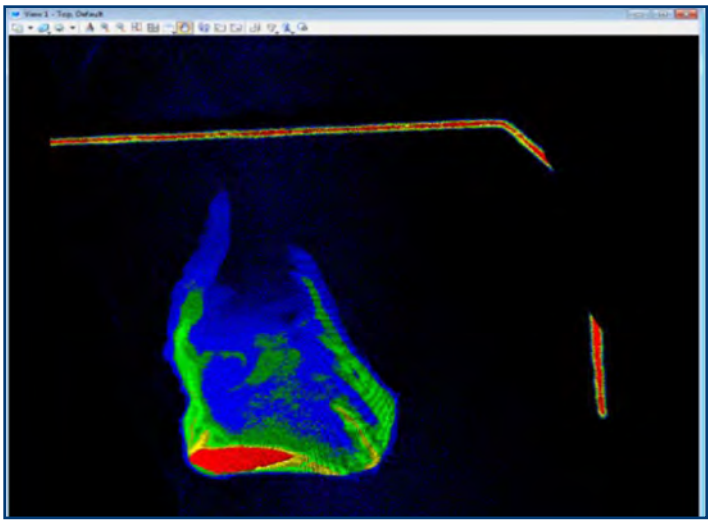
GLO-Funded Research and Development Published on the Web

Researchers from a number of Texas public universities have been working behind the scenes in support of the Texas General Land Office's mandate to protect coastal resources and respond to oil spills. The research involves many hours of laboratory and field research that often culminates into groundbreaking knowledge and ideas that help the oil spill response community better prepare for spills.

Since 1991, the Land Office has supported these efforts through the administration of an oil spill research and development grant program, funded by the Coastal Protection Fund (TEX NR. CODE ANN. § 40.151) in the amount of $1.25 million per year. Past research has focused on topics such as dispersants, resources at risk, mitigation and protection, bioremediation, in-situ burning, remote sensing, oil spill modeling, spill related wildlife impacts and protection strategies. Currently funded projects include:

- Research that will help natural resource managers understand spill impacts to wetland areas and make comprehensive decisions on how to mitigate for impacts;
- Researching near shore currents for trajectory analysis;
- Creation of a tar ball catalogue and software package that will assist in determination of a spill's origins;
- Work on how to better prepare for oil moving through major tidal inlets;
- Work on how to better disseminate Land Office data products;
- Improving, testing and implementing new hardware and software associated with the highly successful TABS Buoy program;
- Research into oil spill predictions within Texas bay systems; and mapping of rookery islands susceptible to oil spills.

Much of this research not only benefits the state of Texas, it also helps oil spill and environmental managers around the nation and world. The research often culminates in peer-reviewed white papers, scientific journal articles or presentations at scientific- and oil spill-related conferences. Beginning this year, researchers sponsored by the Land Office will submit publications for posting to the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program website: http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/oil-spills/research-development/published-research.html.



LiDAR image showing small scale elevation changes of a bird rookery island. These islands are particularly vulnerable to oil spills.

Clean Gulf Conference Returns to San Antonio

Greg Pollock, Deputy Commissioner of the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program, invites you to join the biggest reunion in North America for oil spill response professionals. The 24th annual Clean Gulf Conference brings together the latest trends and best practices in response operations. Key professionals and decision makers from throughout the Gulf Coast and beyond will come together to view the latest products, services and technologies, as well as hear about the latest trends and developments in the oil spill prevention and response industry. Attendees will walk away with viable solutions they can incorporate to safely produce and transport petroleum products and effectively respond when a spill occurs. In addition to outstanding conference sessions, the exhibit floor will feature more than 150 experienced companies ready to assist you with new solutions and technologies that will work best for your organization.

CLEAN GULF is co-hosted by the Texas General Land Office, Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office, Alabama Department of Environmental Management, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and is in association with the U.S. Coast Guard and Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement. For more information, visit www.cleangulf.org or visit our website at www.glo.texas.gov/oilspill.

Don't miss your chance to access over 2,000 oil spill prevention and response professionals and meet with outstanding exhibitors on the show floor. For more information, visit www.cleangulf.org or our website at www.glo.texas.gov/oilspill. You may also contact Debbie Saenz at debbie.saenz@glo.texas.gov or 512.475.1466 or contacat Kayla Pelt at kaylapelt@tradefair.org or call her at 713.343.1869.

CLEAN GULF 2014
Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center
San Antonio, Texas
DECEMBER 2-4, 2014

Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson checks out his agency's Oil Spill Prevention and Response exhibit the last time the conference was in San Antonio.

Congratulations to Maya for taking first place, junior high level, at the Conroe Independent School District Science Fair held in February. Maya visited the Oil Spill Program booth at the ExxonMobil Fair in Houston. Maya is interested in becoming a mechanical engineer. The GLO Oil Spill Program is so pleased to see a young person taking an interest in environmental issues that affect our surroundings.

Mike Janskowski and Gonzalo Pena demonstrating the proper way containment boom and drum skimmers are utilized during oil spill response to students at Ortiz Elementary in Brownsville. GLO-Brownsville participates annually in the school's career on wheels event.

GLO.TEXAS.GOV